

How tobacco farming affects people's lives

- tobacco production in developing nations increased 180% from 1961 to 2009; in 2008, they provided 90% of the world's tobacco leaf
 - tobacco farming displaces food crops – globally, 5.3 million hectares of land suitable for farming are currently under tobacco cultivation - this land could feed 10-20 million people
 - employment in tobacco fields includes practices such as very low wages and child labour – in some developing countries during peak labour demands, children may even be withdrawn from school to work in tobacco fields
 - farm workers can suffer severe health impacts such as increased cancer risks from exposure to chemicals and the nicotine-induced illness, green tobacco sickness, caused by skin exposure to tobacco leaves
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How tobacco farming affects the environment

- tobacco is usually produced as a monocrop, which means it requires large quantities of agrochemicals (eg pesticides, fertilisers, and herbicides) to ward off pests and diseases
 - tobacco ranks sixth among all agricultural trade goods in the amount of pesticides used per acre
 - unlike many food crops, tobacco production offers no replenishment to the soil or to other parts of the farm ecosystem turning food-growing land into barren waste
 - tobacco farming also causes deforestation for growing space and fuel wood for the curing process – in Tanzania alone, over 61,000 hectares of forests are lost every year due to tobacco growing and curing
 - agrochemical use and deforestation cause both ecosystem disruptions and soil degradation
 - ecosystem disruption causes a loss of biodiversity (pesticides harming birds and other small animals), decline of ground water resources, and reduced land resources such as timber for building and cooking
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How tobacco affects the economy in developing countries

- exploitative buying practices and unfair contracts promoted by the tobacco industry trap farmers in cycles of poverty, push farmers into debt, and create conditions that promote child labour
- farmers who grow only tobacco are at the mercy of tobacco agents who can decide to cut the price they are paid without any notice, creating financial insecurity, whereas those who grow food crops can harvest food produce and sell it at market the next day
- the costs of tobacco use encompass increased health-care costs, lost productivity due to illness, premature death, as well as widespread environmental damage. Tobacco use is growing fastest in low- and middle-income countries, owing to steady population growth and tobacco industry targeting. By 2030, more than 80% of the world's tobacco-related deaths will occur in these countries.